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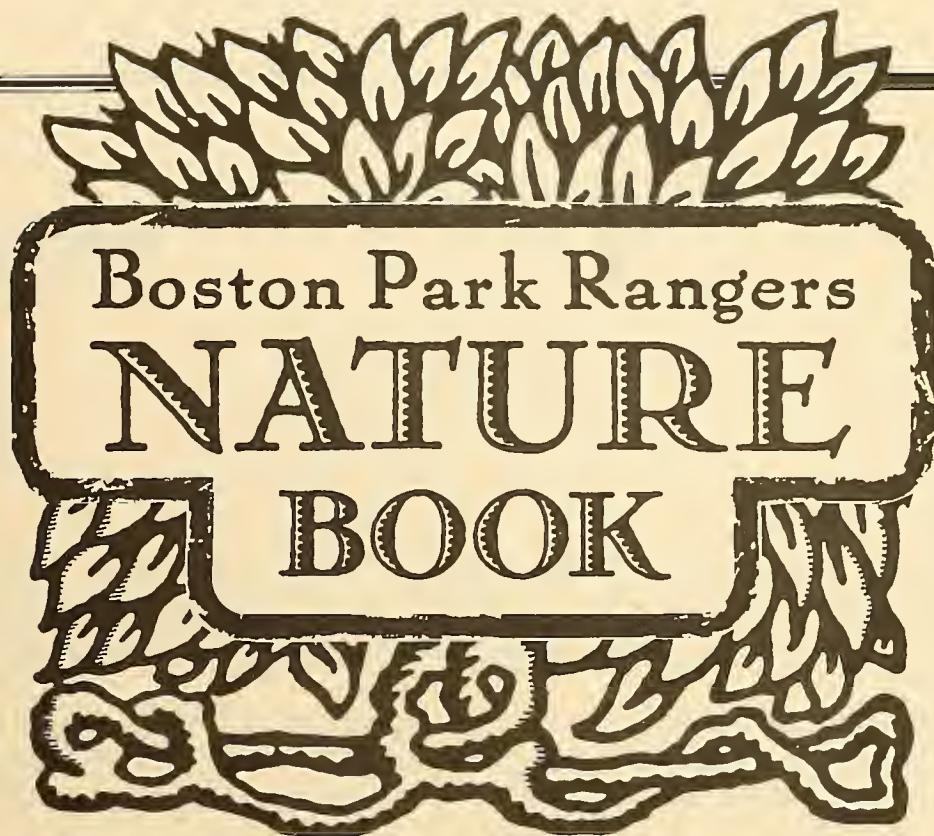
# Boston Park Rangers **NATURE** BOOK



City of Boston

Thomas M. Menino, Mayor  
Patrick S. Harrington, Commissioner





Boston Park Rangers

# NATURE

## BOOK



City of Boston  
Parks and Recreation Department



Thomas M. Menino, Mayor  
Patrick S. Harrington, Commissioner  
Gene Surville, Chief Park Ranger



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# Boston

Thomas M. Menino, Mayor

Dear Friend:

The City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department is pleased to present The Boston Park Rangers Nature Book, a coloring book that can help you learn about the fascinating creatures and plants that share the city with us.

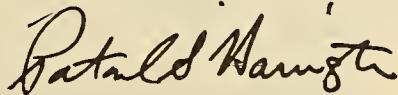
Part of the job of a Boston Park Ranger is to teach people about the park system, and to make sure that the parks are treated with respect. We hope you grow to appreciate and protect the many living things that live in Boston's greenspace.

If you would like to know more about the history and ecology of Boston's parks, join us on a Ranger tour sometime: we offer tours for people of all ages, all year round. Feel free to call us at (617) 635-7383, to find out what programs we have in store for you!

From the historic Boston Common to the rolling fields and forests of Franklin Park, our park system is full of fun places to visit and exciting things to do. We invite you to explore the beauty of the parks and take good care of them.

See you out in the parks!

Sincerely,



Patrick S. Harrington  
Commissioner



Patrick S. Harrington/Commissioner/Parks and Recreation Department/1010 Mass. Ave./Boston, MA 02118

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# Mammals

Many common and unique mammals inhabit Boston's parkland year-round. Mammals bear live young, are warm-blooded, and have mammary glands and fur or hair.



## Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mehitis*)

This furry, black mammal has two broad stripes down its back and tail. When threatened, it raises its tail straight up and sprays a jet of foul-smelling musk.



## Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)

The raccoon is greyish-brown, with a bushy, ringed tail and a black mask. Using their nimble fingers, raccoons capture crayfish, pick berries, and open garbage cans! Families of raccoons can be found throughout the Emerald Necklace Parks.



## Grey Squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*)

Squirrels have grey bodies with paler underparts. Squirrels, which feed mainly on nuts and seeds, are a common sight in our parks and backyards.

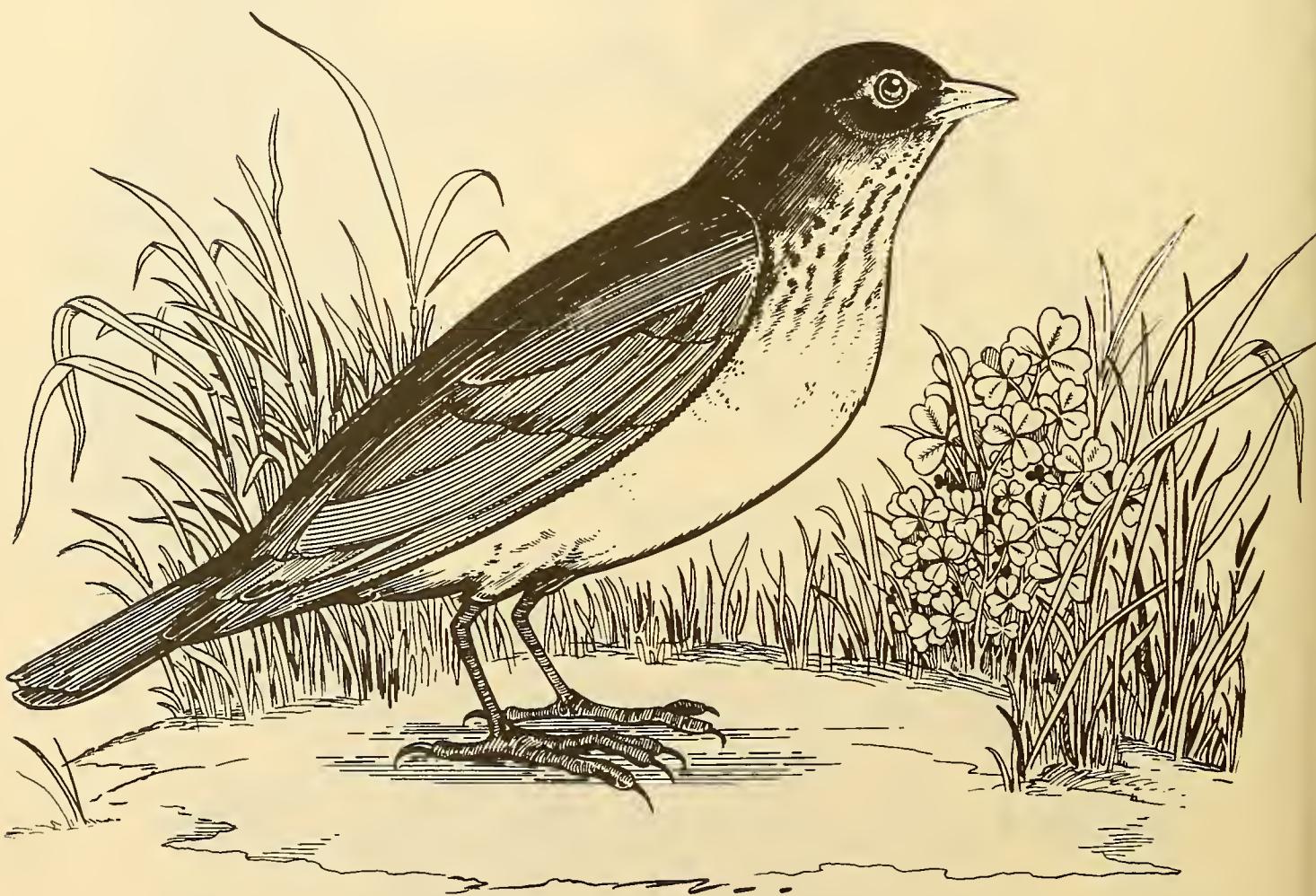


## Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)

These tiny, flying mammals are nocturnal, which means they are active at night. They have small eyes and poor vision, so they depend on their excellent hearing, called echolocation, to find insects to eat. Bats are common throughout the Boston park system.

# Birds

Many birds are migratory, which means that they visit Boston for only part of the year. Others live in the City all year long. Birds are warm-blooded animals that have feathers and lay eggs.



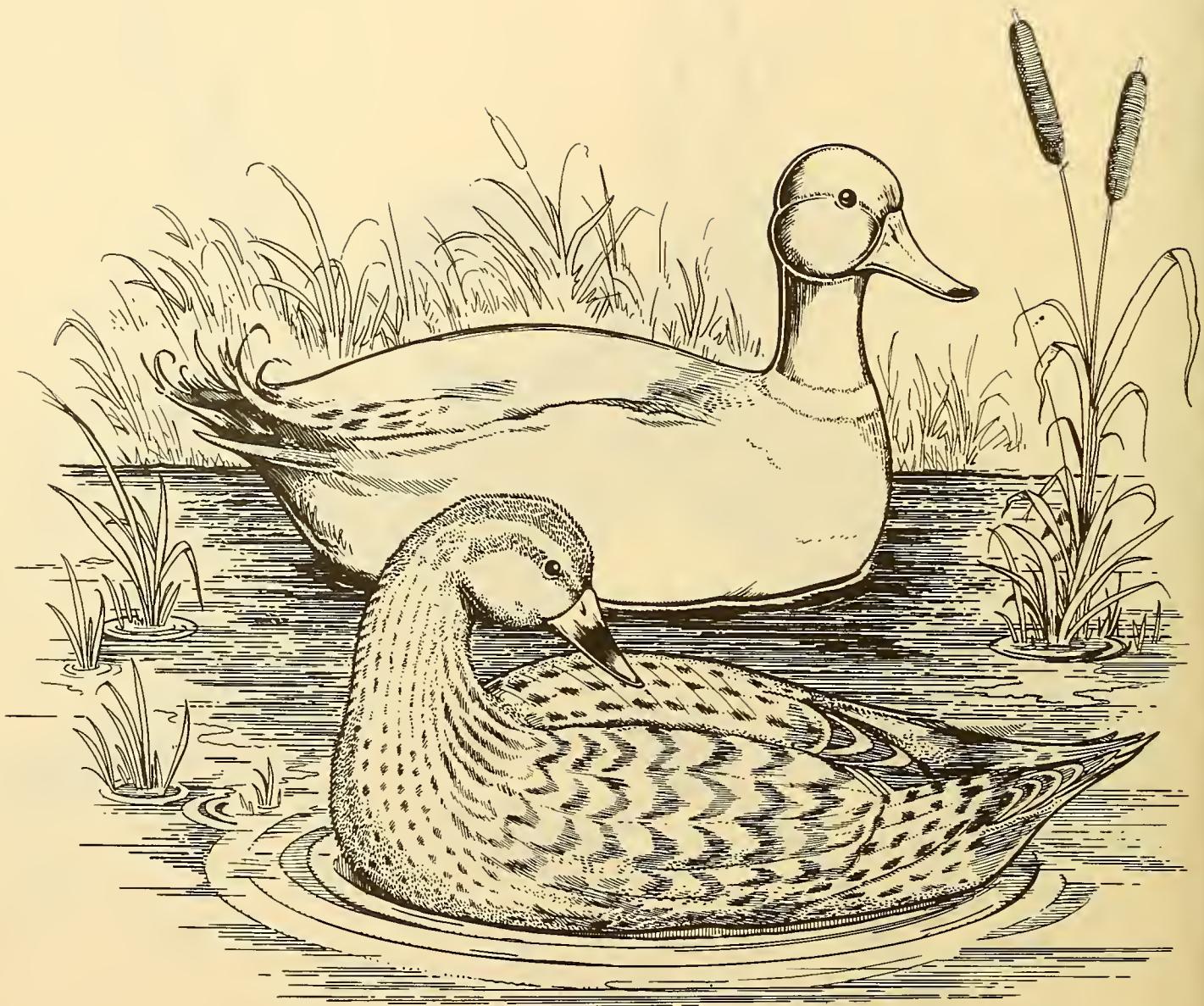
## American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)

Robins, the most familiar songbirds of North America, are often seen running on the ground or stopping to cock their heads and watch for earthworms. They have dark grey bodies with a reddish-orange breast and belly.



## **Black-Capped Chickadee** (*Parus atricapillus*)

The official state bird of both Massachusetts and Maine, the chickadee has a grey body and a black head with white cheeks. They often feed upside down, attaching to twigs and branches, to search for insect eggs. They often make their homes in the Arnold Arboretum and Franklin Park.



## **Mallard Duck (*Anas platyrhynchos*)**

The male Mallard has a green head with a brown breast, white neck ring, and blue patch on its wing. The female is brown, with the same blue wing patch. In the summer, the male looks very similar to the female. They can be found in the Public Garden, and throughout the Emerald Necklace waterways.



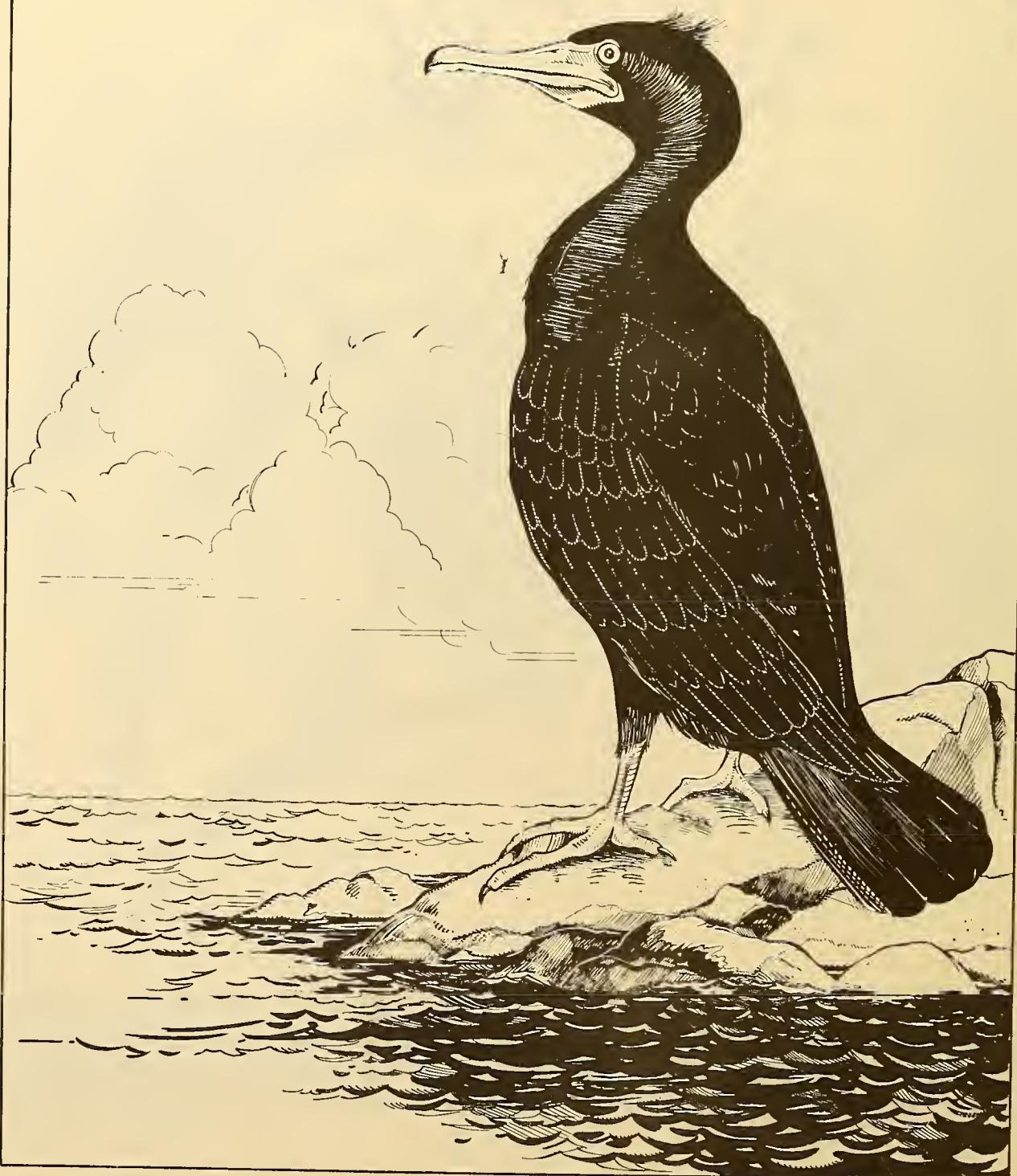
## Bluejay (*Cyanocitta cristata*)

This bold and noisy bird is easily identified by its shiny blue feathers, black necklace, and blue crest. They often bury seeds and acorns, many of which grow into plants and trees later on because they are never recovered. Bluejays are found in most of our parks, and sometimes in your backyard.

## Double-Crested Cormorant

(*Phalacrocorax auritus*)

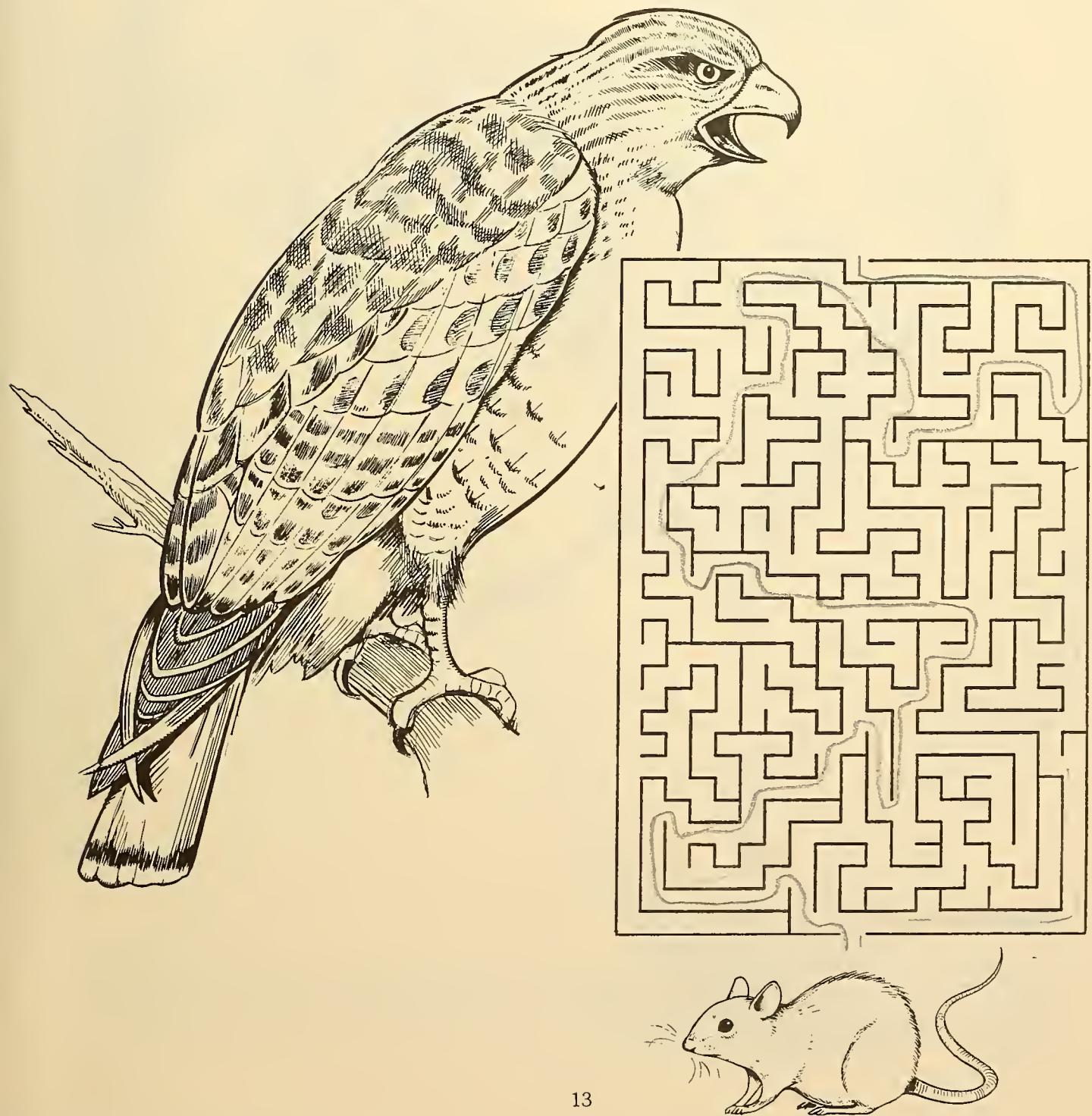
These graceful diving birds get their name from the Latin name for "sea crow." They are great fishermen and have been used for fishing in Japan. The birds dive, capture the fish on their hooked beaks, and return them to the fishing boat. Cormorants make Jamaica Pond, Back Bay Fens, and the Muddy River their home.



# PREDATOR/PREY MAZE

## Red-Tailed Hawk

The red-tailed hawk is a bird of prey (predator). It has a sharp, hooked bill and strong talons to capture live prey, usually small rodents. They frequently soar or hover in the air looking for signs of their prey's movement, and then descend in a steep dive to capture. Red-tailed hawks can be seen in several parks, including Boston Common, the Arboretum, and Franklin Park. Help this hawk catch the mouse at the other end of this maze.



# Plants

Plants include wildflowers, grasses, shrubs, and trees. All are capable of making their own food supply by a process called photosynthesis, where sunlight is converted into food by the plant.



## **Poison Ivy (*Rhus radicans*)**

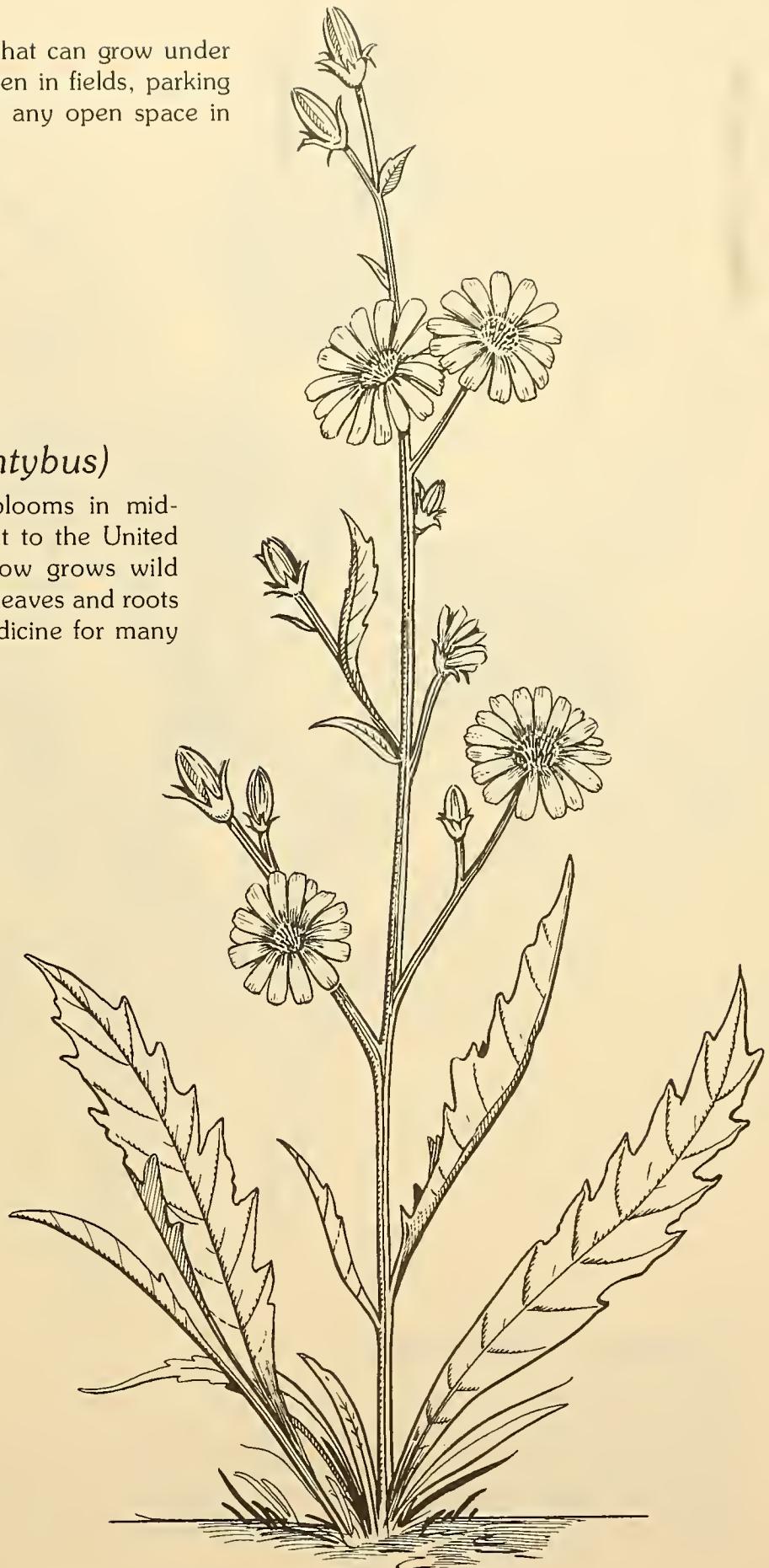
Poison ivy can take an upright, climbing, or shrub form, with leaves divided into three leaflets. Beware! All parts of the plant contain an oil that causes itching and skin blisters in humans. In winter, birds will eat the fruits without any harmful effects; however, they are highly poisonous to humans.

# Wildflowers

Wildflowers are flowering plants that can grow under harsh conditions. They can be seen in fields, parking lots, sidewalk cracks, and almost any open space in Boston.

## Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)

This bright purple-blue flower blooms in mid-summer. It was originally brought to the United States by early settlers, and now grows wild throughout parks in Boston. The leaves and roots have been used as food and medicine for many centuries.





## Common Milkweed

(*Asclepias syriaca*)

Milkweed has clusters of white or pink flowers and white milky sap inside the stems. They have distinctive seed-pods that contain hundreds of tufted, silky, wind-born seeds.

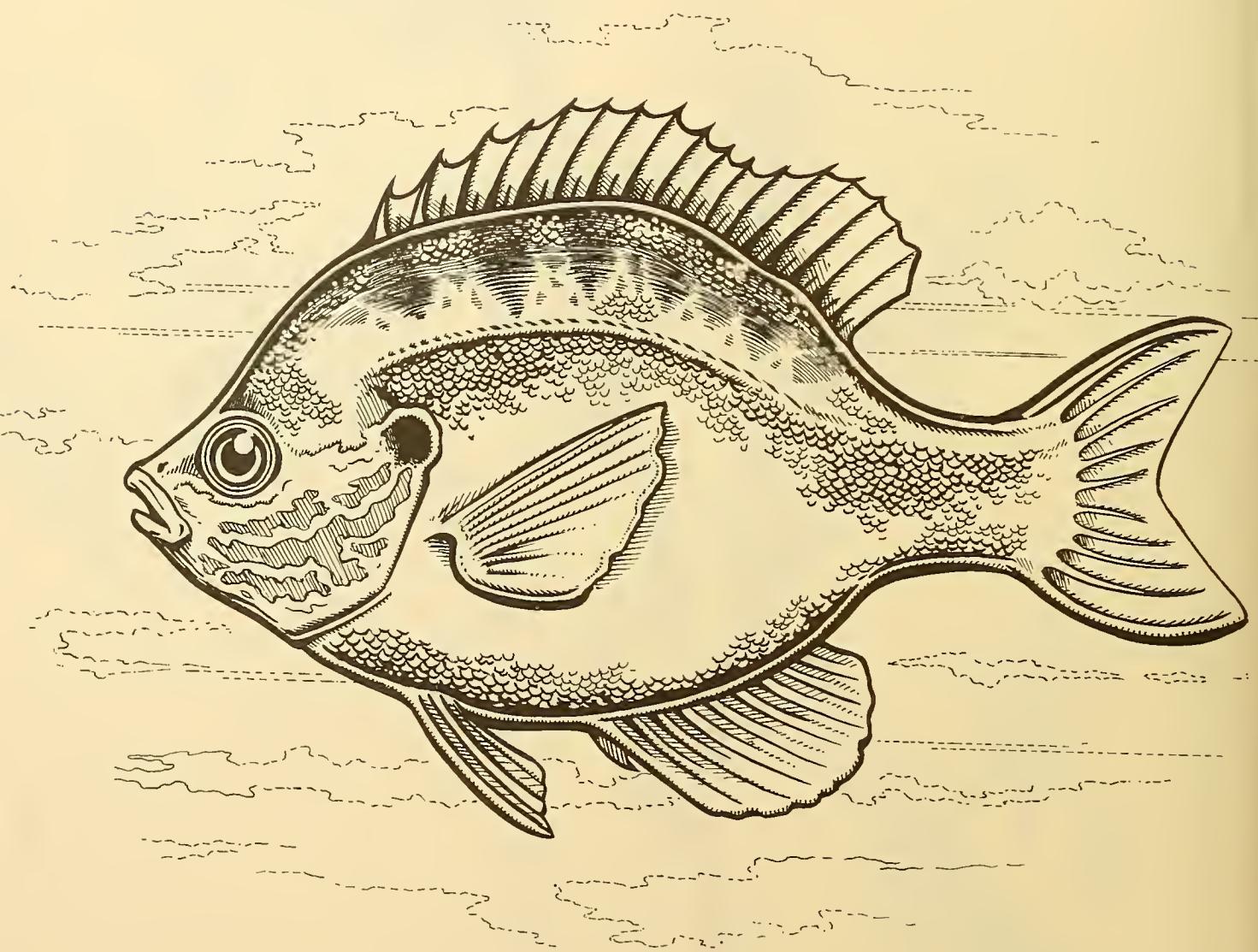


## **Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)**

This large golden-yellow flower with a brown center and hairy stem is grown in many gardens, but it is Native to North America and grows wild throughout Boston.

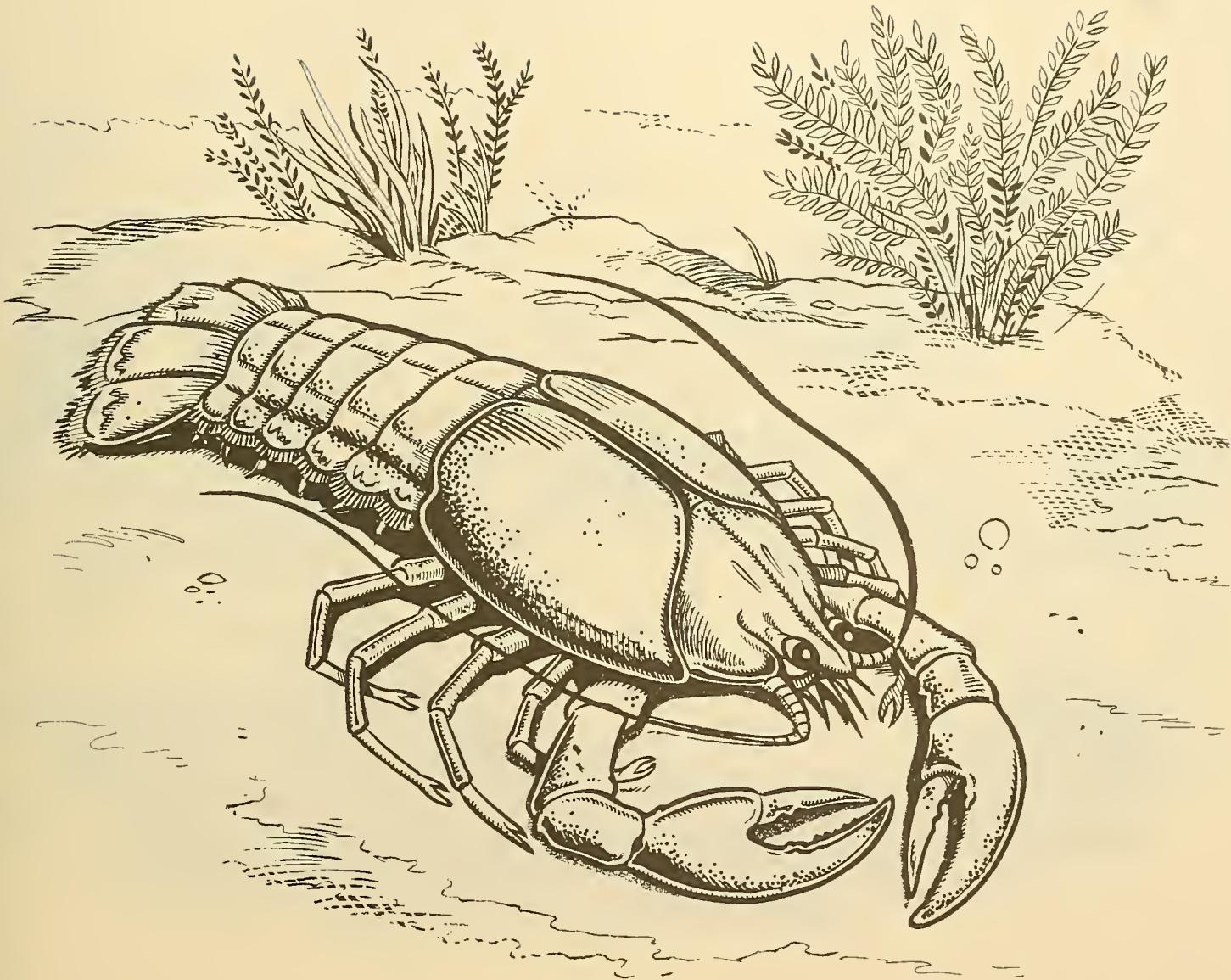
# Fish

Fish are cold-blooded vertebrates (animals that have backbones). Fish have gills, fins, and scales. They live in the water and can be seen in any park in Boston that has a large pond or stream.



## Bluegill Sunfish (*Lepomis macrochirus*)

Sunfish, which are found in ponds and lakes, feed on small fish and insects. Their scales grow rapidly in the summer, and slow down in the winter, causing them to grow closer together.

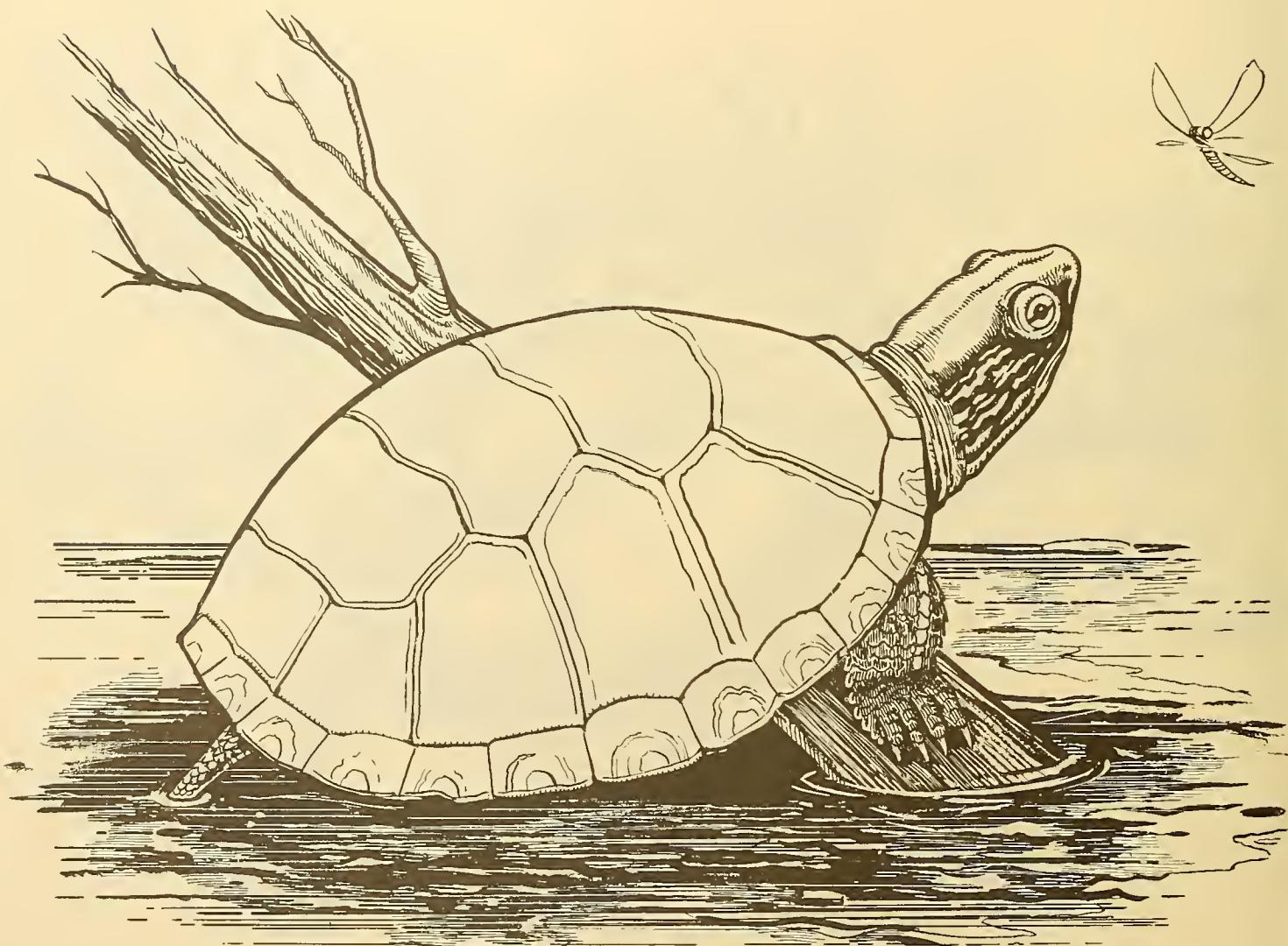


## Crayfish (*Cambarus bartoni*)

A relative of the lobster, crab, and shrimp, these crustaceans have an exoskeleton (outside skeleton) which protects them against predators. They can be observed along the rocky shallows of Jamaica Pond, using their large claws to obtain food.

# Reptiles

Reptiles include snakes, lizards, and turtles. They are cold-blooded animals characterized by having a bony skeleton and a body covered with scales or plates. Dinosaurs, for example, were reptiles.

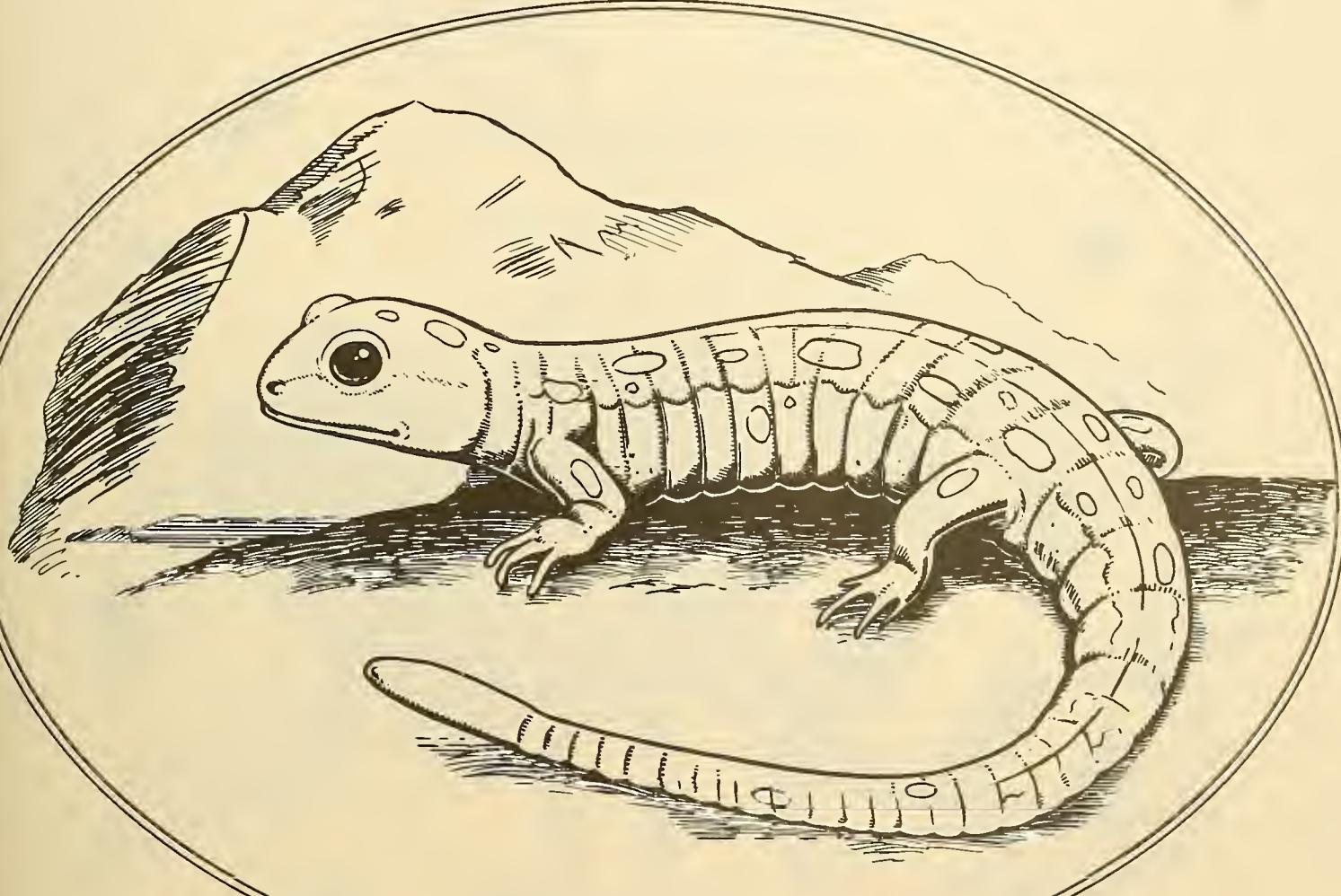


## **Painted Turtle** (*Chrysemus picta*)

This colorful reptile has yellow and red stripes “painted” on its neck, legs, tail, and shell. It is often seen on the rocks and logs in the Back Bay Fens and in Franklin Park’s Scarborough Pond, basking in the sun.

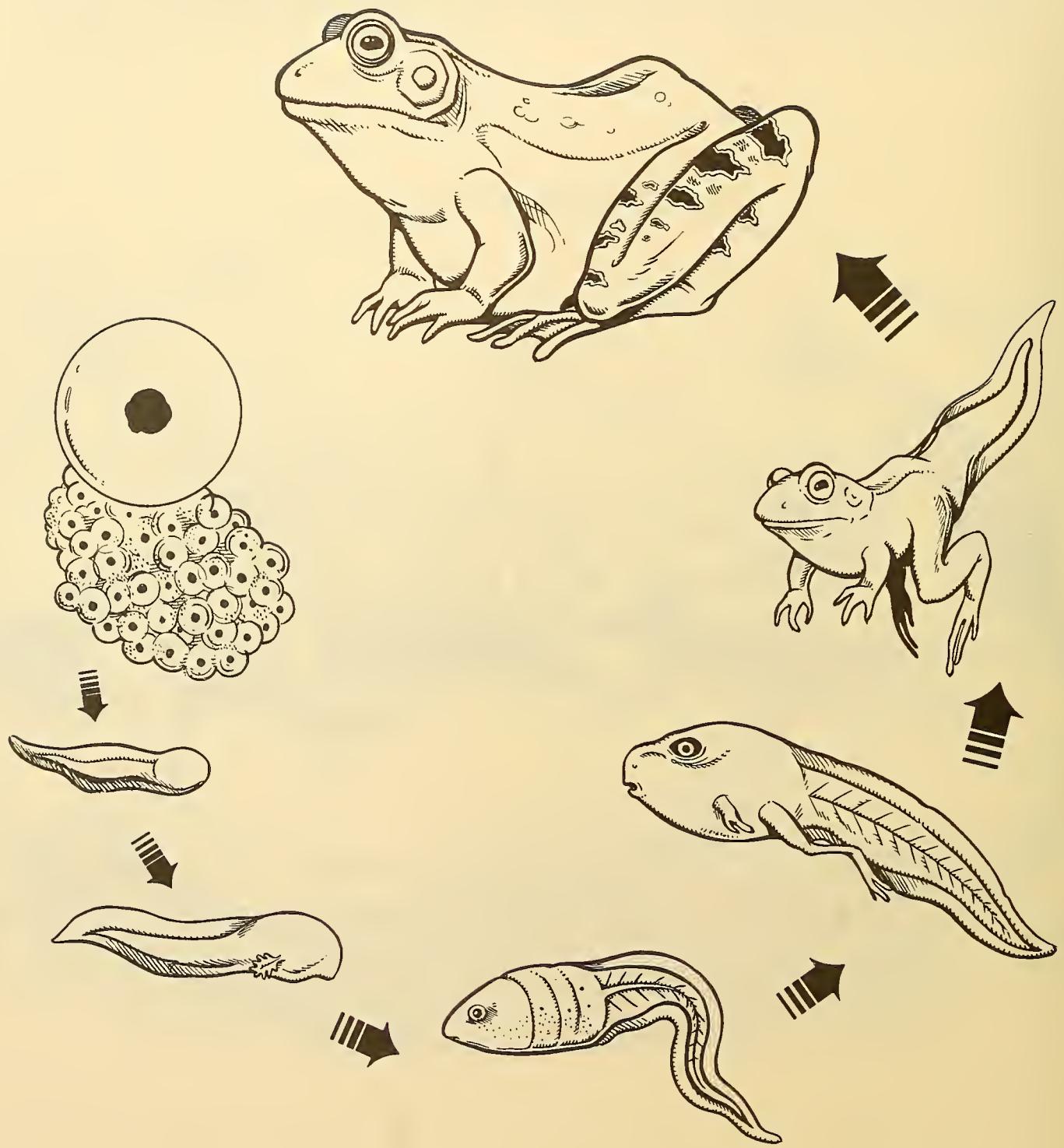
# Amphibians

Amphibians can be found in almost all of the ponds in Boston. They are characterized by being cold-blooded and scaleless. They usually begin life in the water with gills and later develop lungs, allowing them to live on land.



## Spotted Salamander (*Ambystoma maculatum*)

The spotted salamander is an endangered species of amphibian in Massachusetts. It has black skin, with yellow spots, and can grow to seven inches. They can be found under rotting logs around Jamaica Pond.

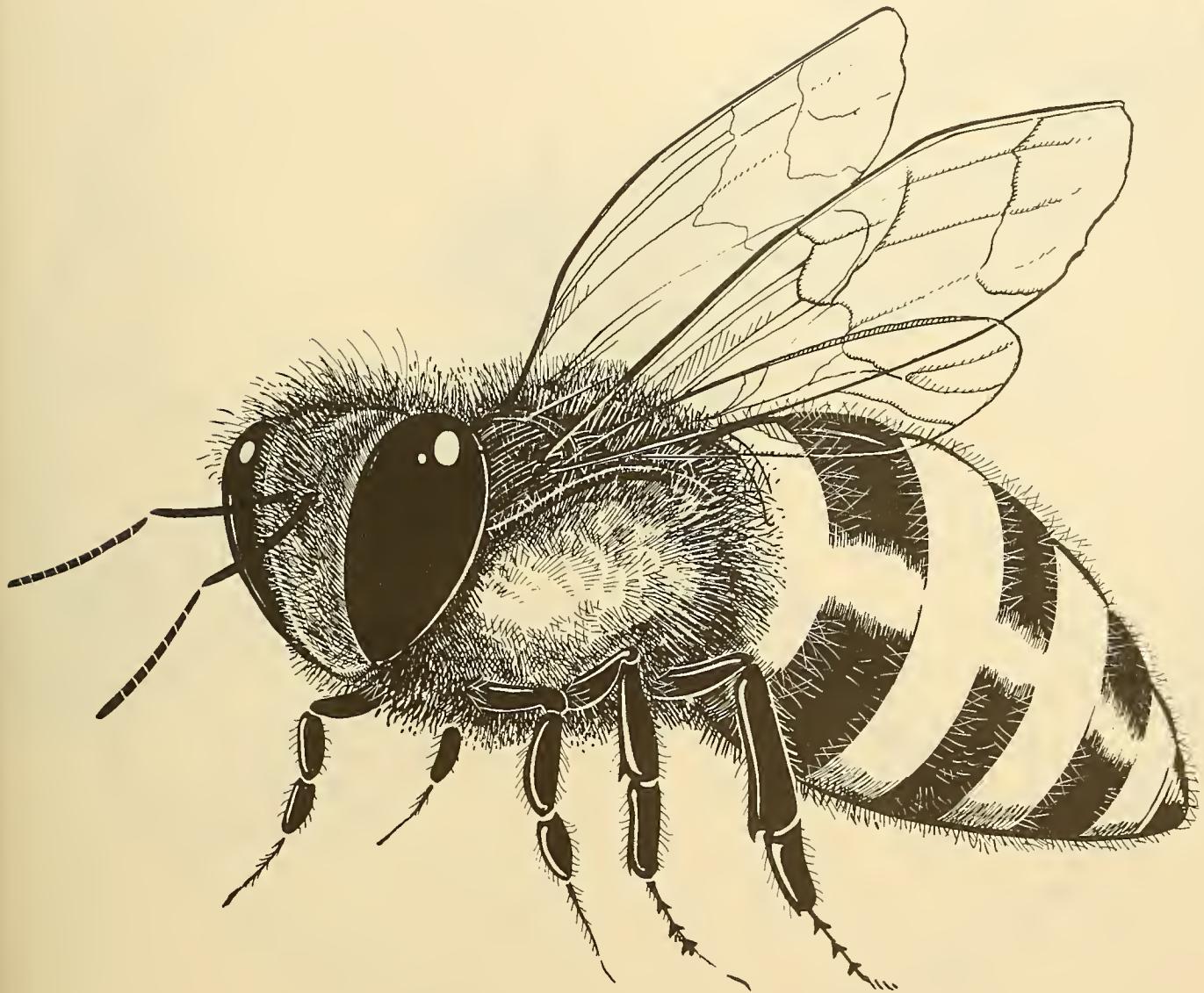


## Bullfrog (*Rana Catasbeiana*)

The largest frog found in Boston, the bullfrog is an amphibian that lives in Franklin Park, Olmsted Park, and Back Bay Fens. They prefer weedy areas of ponds and eat insects.

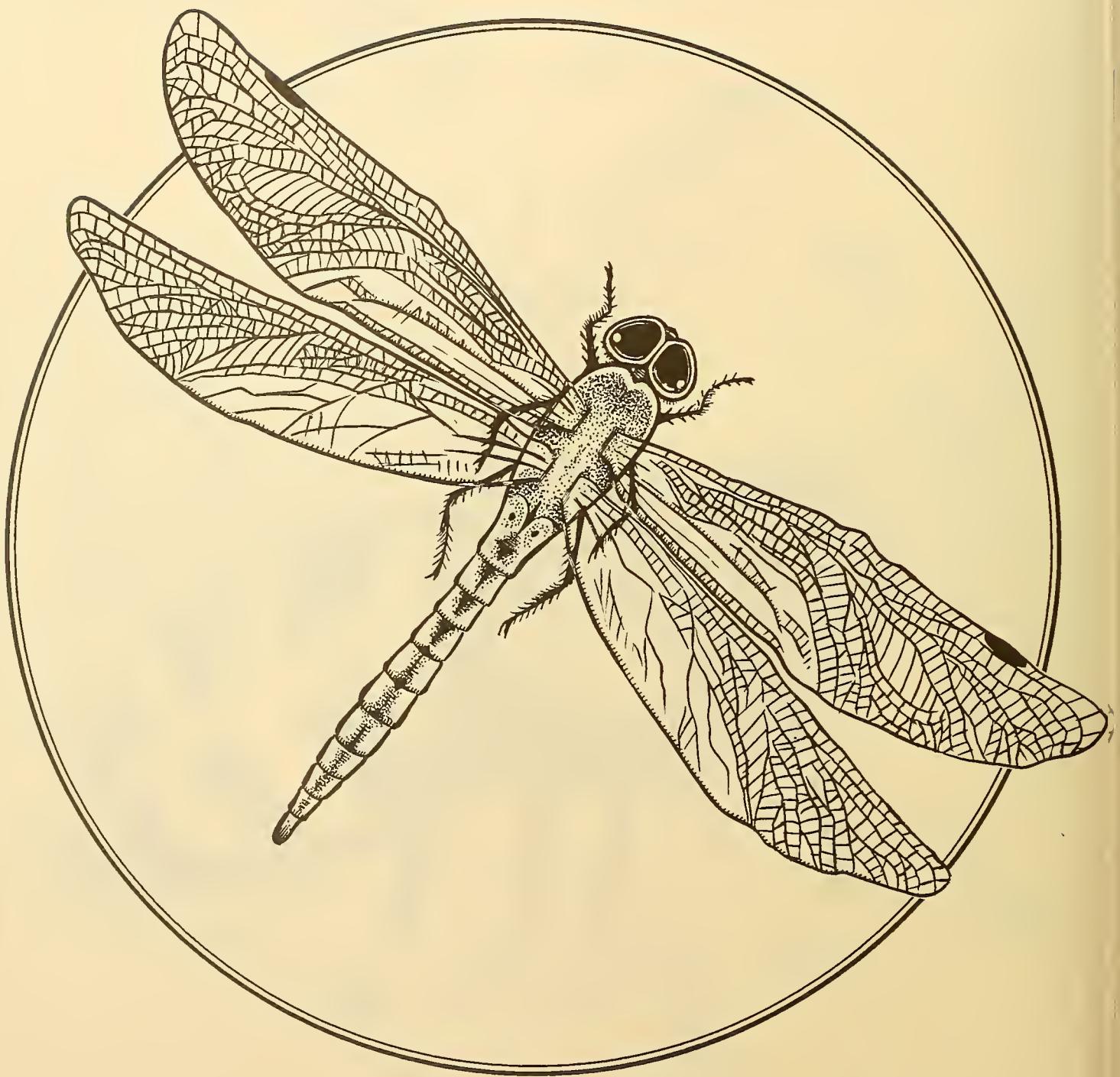
# Insects

Insects, perhaps the most numerous residents of Boston, are characterized by having segmented body parts, and usually two pairs of wings.



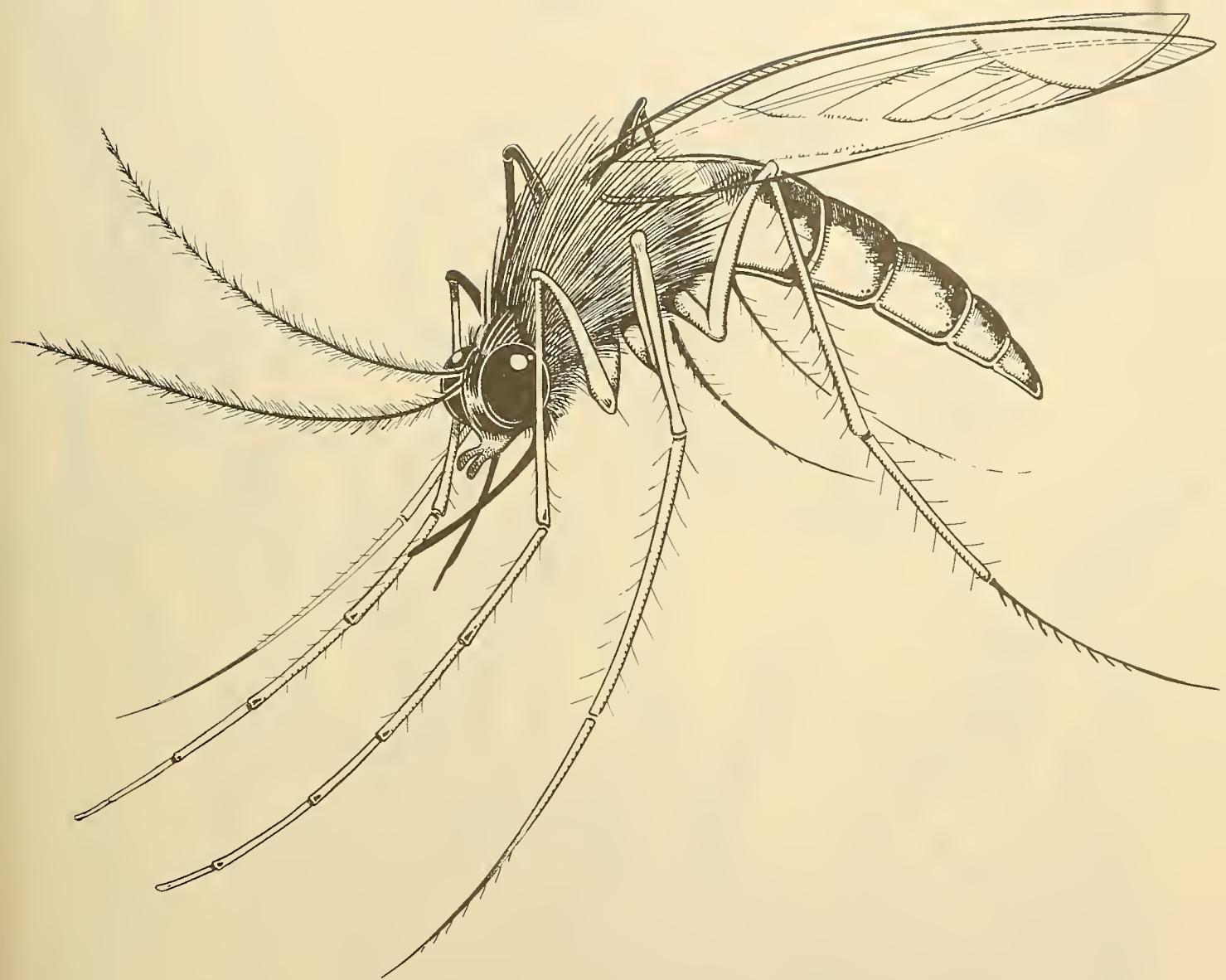
## Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera*)

Honey bees are valuable not only because of the honey and beeswax they produce, but because they pollinate flowers. A beehive contains three separate groups of bees: workers, drones, and the queen.



## Dragonfly (*Anax junius*)

The dragonfly eats almost anything it can, including small fish. The lower part of the mouth stretches like a long arm to grab passing animals. The female lays her eggs in the water. You can observe dragonflies at Franklin Park's Scarborough Pond and Olmsted Park's Wards Pond.



## Mosquitoes (*Culex pipiens*)

Mosquitoes, which are common in many areas, inflict an itchy bite. However, only the females bite, in order to supply a meal of blood to produce their eggs. Males feed on plant nectar. They lay their eggs in moist, wet areas such as ponds and the wet meadow of the Arnold Arboretum.



## Wood Nymph (*Eudryas unio*)

This butterfly, which is a favorite snack for birds, has wing spots that look like tiny eyes, and blends easily into nature. Wood nymphs can be seen amongst the flowers in the Back Bay Fens Victory Gardens.

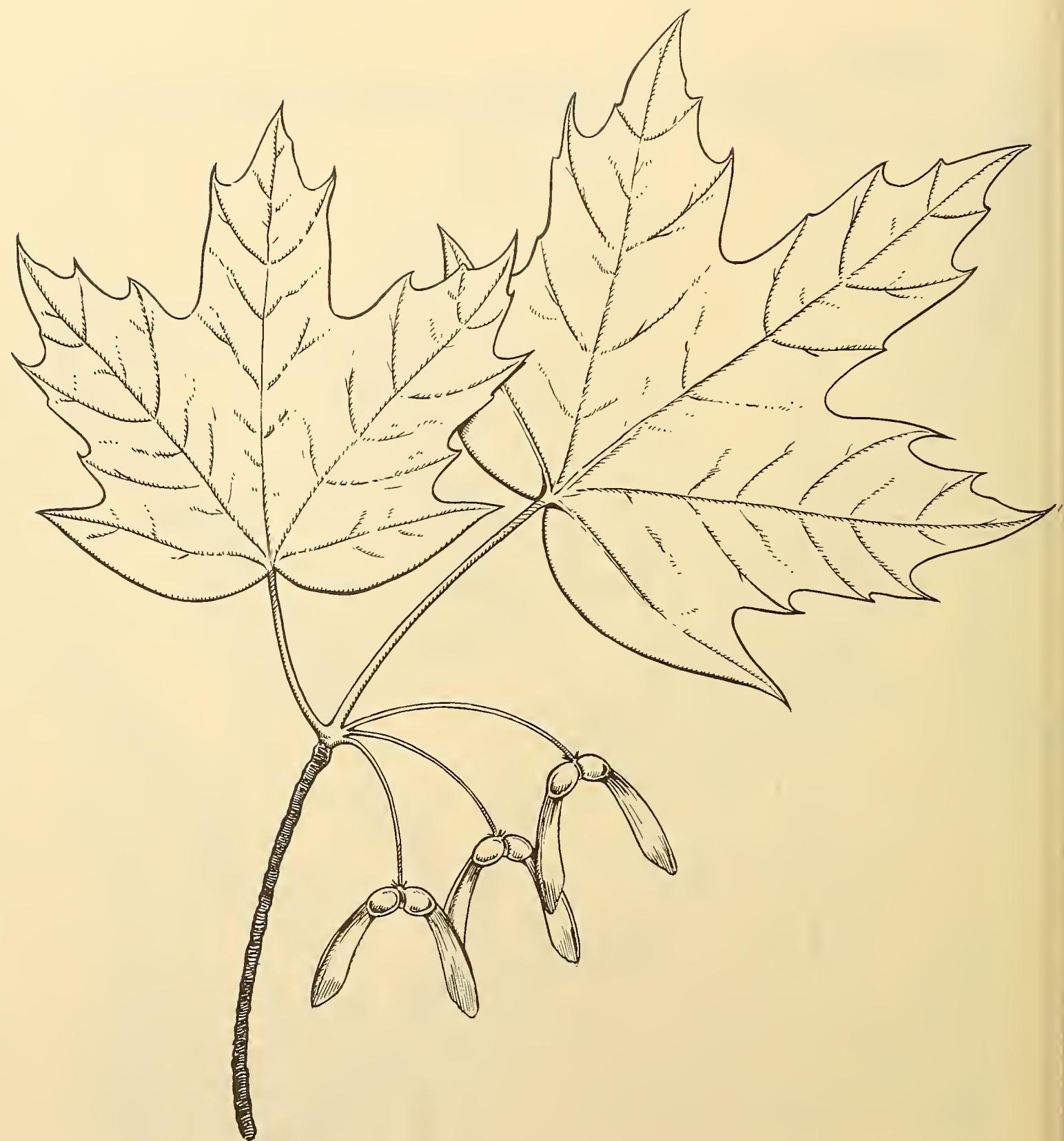
# Trees

Trees differ from wildflowers in that they are a woody perennial plant with one main stem or trunk which develops many branches, usually at some height above the ground. Most trees are over ten feet tall when mature.



## American Elm (*Ulmus americana*)

Once a popular shade tree, the American Elm is slowly disappearing. A fungus called Dutch Elm Disease attacks and kills the tree. Healthy American Elms can be seen along Commonwealth Avenue Mall and in the Public Garden.



## Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*)

Maples, perhaps best known for their wing-shaped seeds, are one of the leading furniture woods. The sugar maple is a source of maple syrup and sugar, yielding between 1-2 gallons of syrup, or 4.5 pounds of sugar, per year. Maples can be seen in Franklin Park, the Arnold Arboretum, and Boston Common.

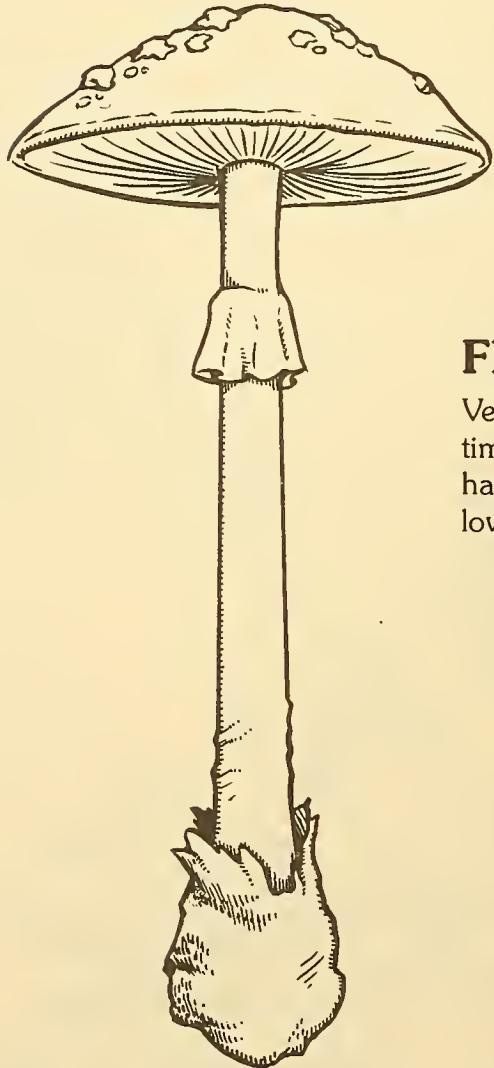


## Staghorn Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)

Common in many of the Boston parks, this tree has distinctive, torch-shaped clusters of red berries covered with velvety red hairs. The twigs and branches are covered with soft whiskers that resemble the antlers of a young deer (stag); hence the name staghorn sumac.

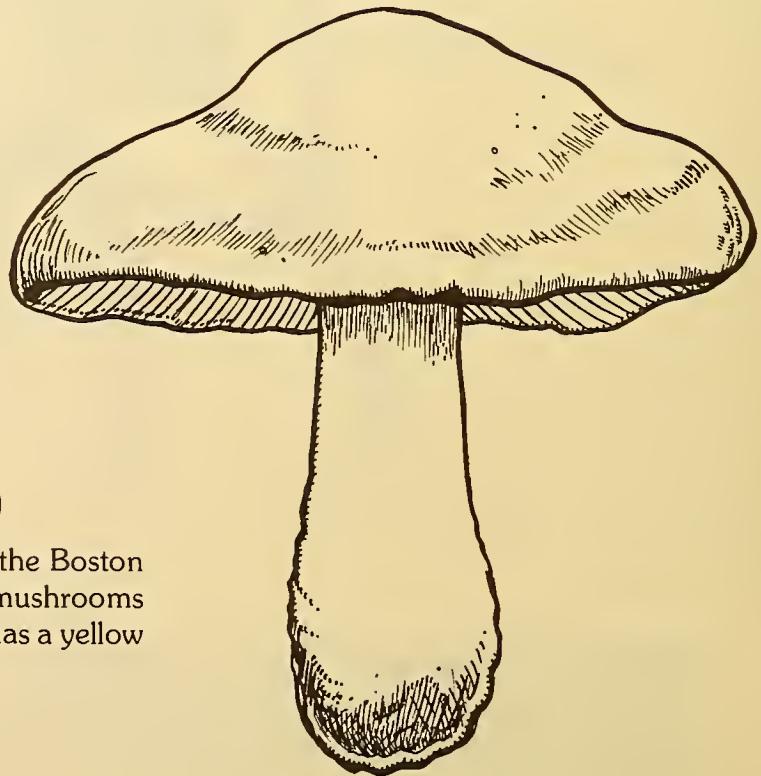
# Fungi

Fungi are members of a kingdom of living organisms that grow similar to plants, but do not have leaves, roots, stems, flowers and seeds. Instead of seeds, for example, they have spores, which are tiny macroscopic cells. They grow in soil and dead wood in many of Boston's parks.



## Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*)

Very poisonous — do not eat! This tall toadstool, which sometimes grows in the woods of Franklin Park and Jamaica Pond, has a shiny cap colored red, yellow, orange, or red, with yellowish warts.

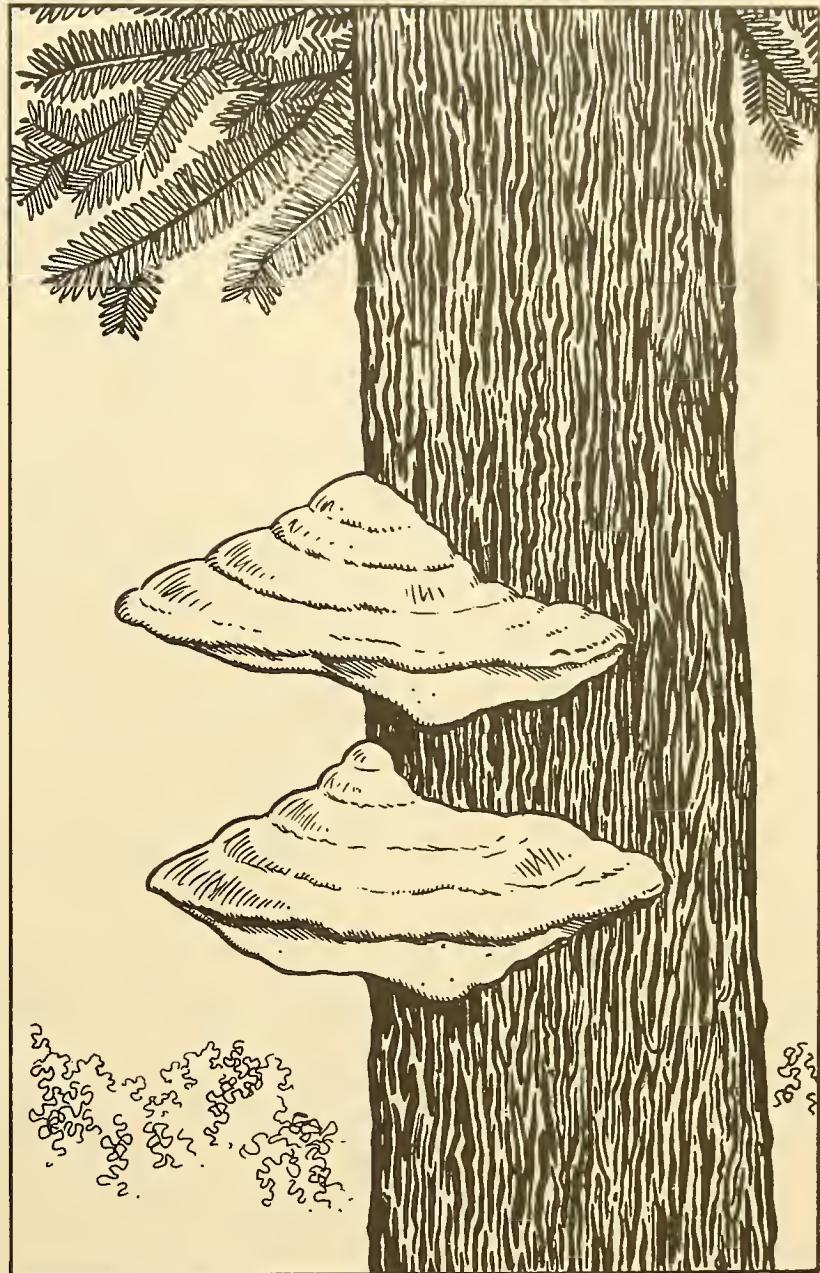
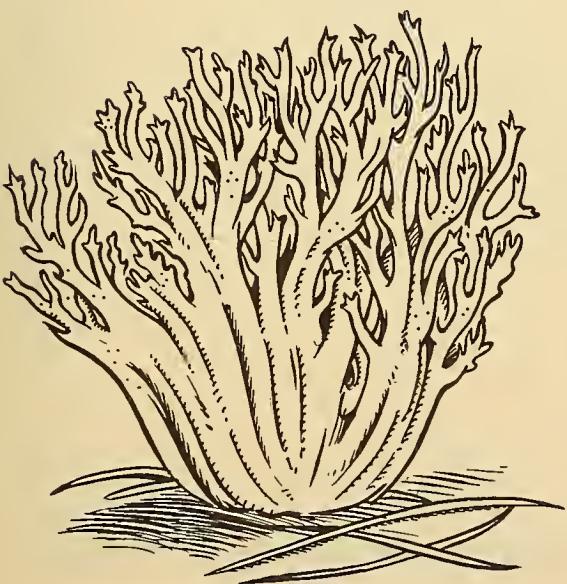


## King Bolete (*Boletus edulis*)

This mushroom, found in wooded areas of the Boston park system, has a thick brown cap. Most mushrooms have gills underneath the cap, but this kind has a yellow surface with pores instead of gills.

## Coral Mushroom (*Clavaria*)

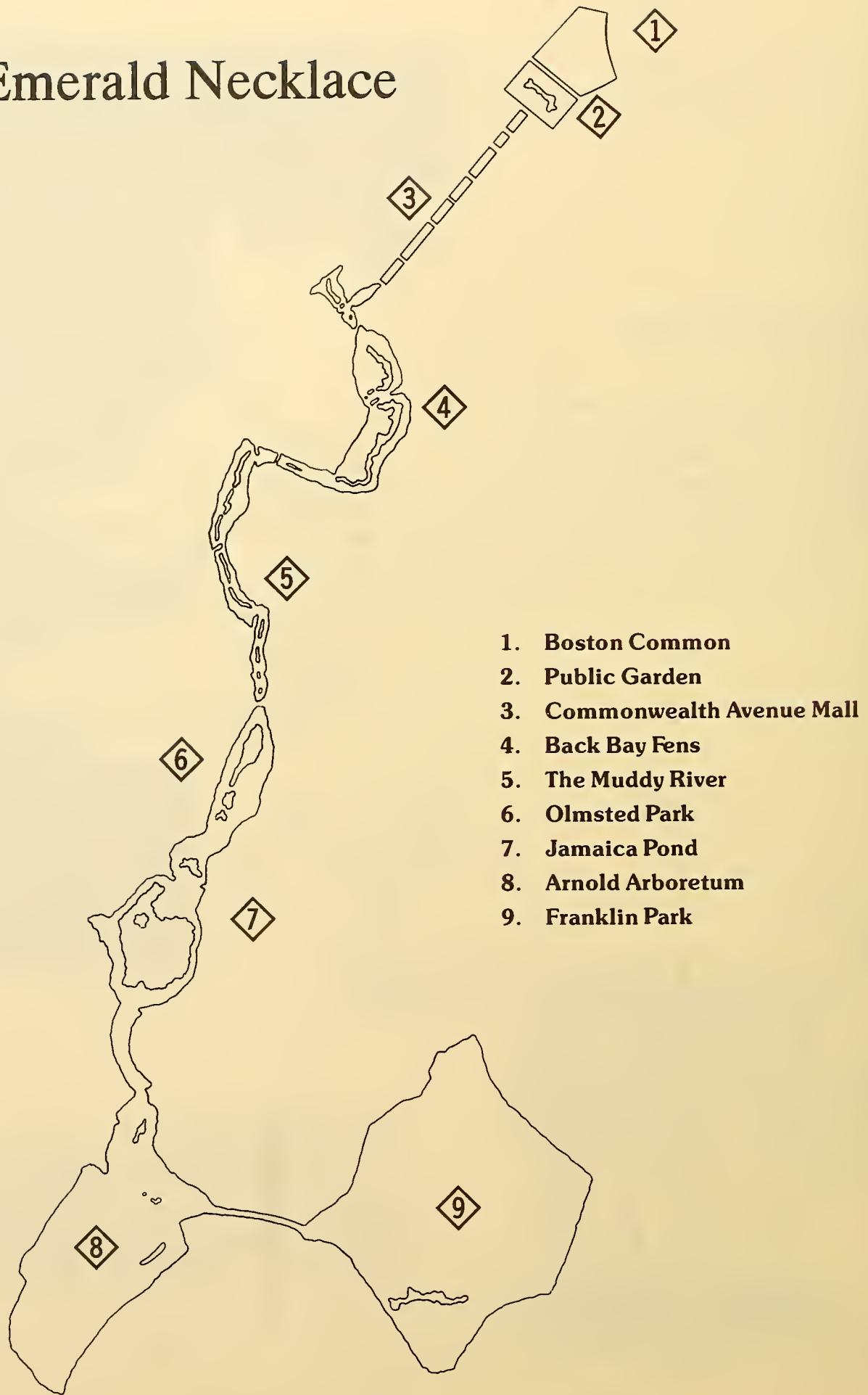
These mushrooms can have beautiful colors like magenta, purple, and orange. They grow in moist soils near coniferous trees. Beware — some kinds of coral mushrooms are poisonous!



## Artist's Fungus (*Ganoderma applanatum*)

Large, flat, and woody, this is a kind of shelf fungi that grows on the trunks of leafy trees in Olmsted Park and Franklin Park. Artists sometimes carve or engrave the soft, cork-like flesh; hence the name.

# The Emerald Necklace



## About the Emerald Necklace

In 1878, Frederick Law Olmsted, the father of landscape architecture, began designing the system of parks that we know today as “The Emerald Necklace.” It is a chain of nine parks that stretches from the historic Boston Common all the way to Franklin Park.

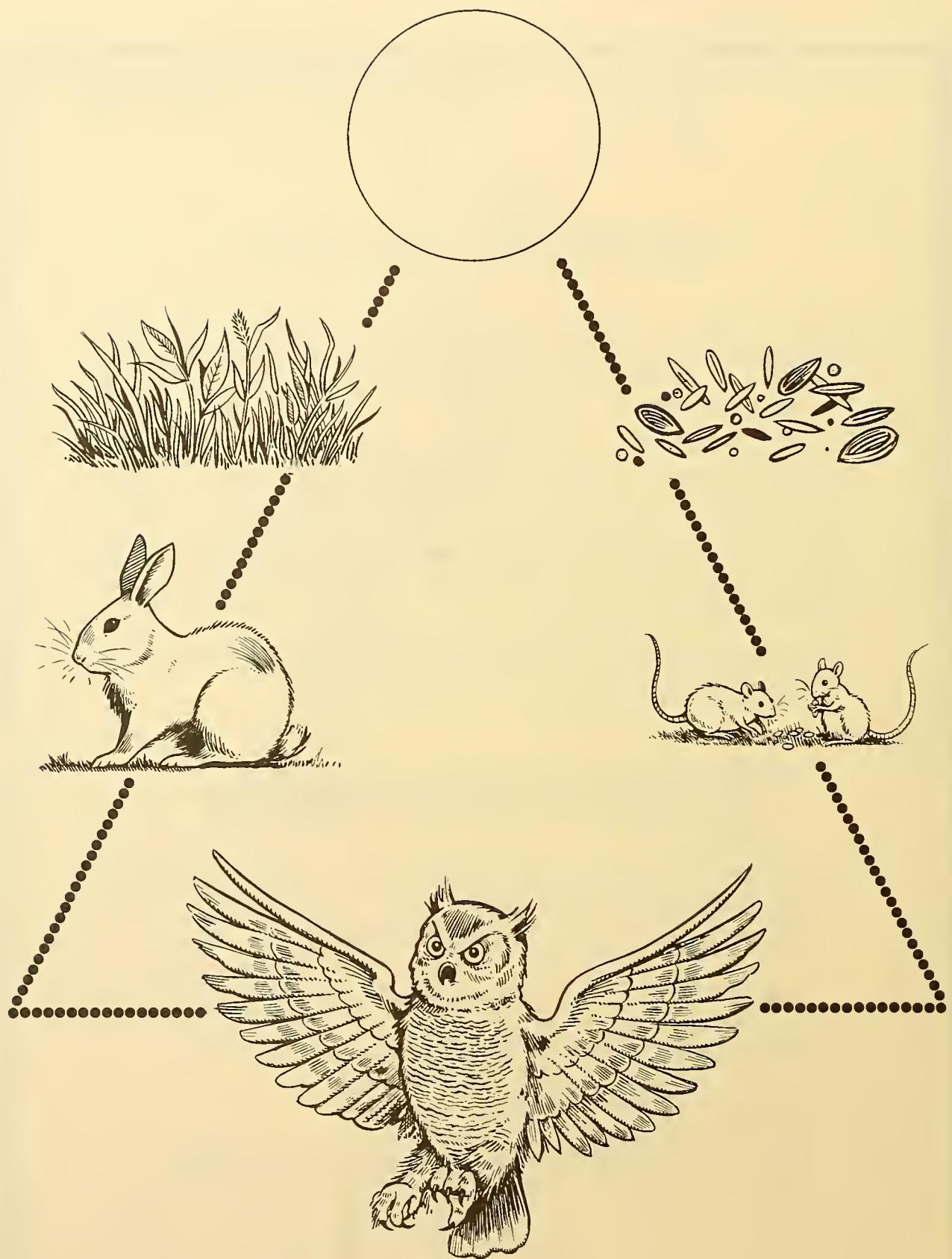
All of the animals, plants and fungi in this book can be found in the Emerald Necklace. For example, many different fish are found in Jamaica Pond, which is the largest body of water in Boston parks. The Arnold Arboretum has a famous collection of trees and shrubs from around the world; the word “arboretum” means tree museum. The Boston Common is the oldest of these parks and is the oldest park in the nation (established in 1634 — long before Frederick Law Olmsted was born!).

Come visit the parks and meet the Park Rangers to learn more about the Emerald Necklace, as well as other parks in your neighborhood.

## The Emerald Necklace Challenge

After reading the above paragraphs and looking at the map on the opposite page, try to answer the following questions:

1. What are the nine parks in the Emerald Necklace?
2. Who is the father of landscape architecture?
3. What is the oldest park in the United States?
4. What does “arboretum” mean?
5. What park in the Emerald Necklace has the largest body of water?



The sun is the source of all food pyramids, also known as food chains. Through a process called photosynthesis, the sun helps plants produce their own food. The plants are then eaten by animals, such as rabbits or mice, which are in turn eaten by a larger animal such as an owl. What would happen if one of the items above was missing from the food pyramid?

## DO YOU KNOW?

1. **What is the official state bird of Massachusetts?**
2. **Name a poisonous mushroom, and describe what it looks like.**
3. **What do squirrels eat?**
4. **How do bats find insects to eat at night?**
5. **What kind of seeds does the common milkweed have?**
6. **What kind of animal usually has two pairs of wings?**
7. **What is the disease that kills many elm trees?**
8. **What crustacean resembles a small lobster?**
9. **What kind of poisonous plant has three leaflets?**
10. **Name one kind of amphibian in the Emerald Necklace.**

## CREDITS

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